

What is claimed is:

1. A method for facilitating a secure delivery of a document from a sender to a next recipient on a routing list, the method comprising the steps of:
 - receiving an indication that a sender desires to deliver a document to a next stage on a routing list for the document;
 - identifying a recipient from the next stage of the routing list; and
 - providing a key selected from a group consisting of the recipient's public key and an escrow encryption key.
2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
 - defining and storing the routing list before an originating sender indicates a desire to deliver the document to the routing list.
3. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
 - receiving the routing list together with an indication that an originating sender desires to deliver the document to the routing list; and
 - storing the routing list.
4. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
 - sending the key to the sender.
5. The method of claim 4 wherein the step of sending the key to the sender comprises:
 - sending to the sender a digital certificate containing the recipient's public key.
6. The method of claim 4 further comprising:
 - the sender encrypting the document using the key; and
 - the sender delivering the encrypted document to the recipient.

7. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
 - the sender delivering the document to the recipient.
8. The method of claim 1 wherein:
 - the routing list is identified by a routing list identifier; and
 - the step of receiving an indication that a sender desires to deliver a document to a next stage on the routing list includes receiving the routing list identifier.
9. The method of claim 8 wherein the routing list identifier includes an email address.
10. The method of claim 8 wherein the routing list identifier includes an address at a domain name for routing lists.
11. The method of claim 1 wherein:
 - the next stage in the routing list comprises a group of recipients; and
 - the step of identifying a recipient from the next stage comprises identifying at least one of the recipients in the group.
12. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of receiving an indication that a sender desires to deliver a document to a next stage on the routing list comprises:
 - receiving a query from the sender for an identity of a recipient from the next stage of the routing list.
13. The method of claim 12 further comprising:
 - tracking a current recipient of the document from the routing list; and
 - in response to the query:
 - returning an error message, if the routing list cannot be located or the querying sender is not the current recipient; and
 - returning the identity of at least one recipient from the next stage of the routing list, if the querying sender is the current recipient.

14. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

tracking a current recipient of the document from the routing list.

15. The method of claim 14 further comprising:

receiving confirmation that the recipient has received the document; and

updating the current recipient of the document to reflect the received confirmation.

16. The method of claim 1 wherein the routing list includes rules.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein the rules are encapsulated in forms

18. The method of claim 16 wherein the rules embody a business process.

19. The method of claim 1 wherein the routing list includes conditional recipients.

20. The method of claim 19 wherein the step of receiving an indication that a sender desires to

deliver a document to a next stage on a routing list for the document comprises:

receiving a parameter from the sender, wherein the recipient depends on the parameter received.

21. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of receiving an indication that a sender desires to

deliver a document to a next stage on a routing list for the document comprises:

receiving a form containing rules for the routing list.

22. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of receiving an indication that a sender desires to

deliver a document to a next stage on a routing list for the document comprises:

receiving a routing parameter for the routing list.

23. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of receiving an indication that a sender desires to

deliver a document to a next stage on a routing list for the document comprises:

receiving the document together with the indication.

24. The method of claim 23 further comprising:

delivering the document to the recipient.

25. The method of claim 23 further comprising:

delivering the document in read-only mode to the recipient.

26. The method of claim 23 further comprising:

encrypting the document using the key before delivering the document to the recipient.

27. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

authenticating the sender using the sender's public key;

establishing a first secure connection with the sender; and

receiving the document from the sender via the first secure connection.

28. The method of claim 27 further comprising:

authenticating the recipient using the recipient's public key;

establishing a second secure connection with the recipient; and

transmitting the document to the recipient via the second secure connection.

29. A computer program product for facilitating a secure delivery of a document from a sender to a next recipient on a routing list, the computer program product comprising program code adapted to perform the steps of:

receiving an indication that a sender desires to deliver a document to a next stage on a

routing list for the document;

identifying a recipient from the next stage of the routing list; and

providing a key selected from a group consisting of the recipient's public key and an escrow encryption key.

30. The computer program product of claim 29 wherein the program code is further adapted to perform the step of:
sending the key to the sender.
31. The computer program product of claim 29 wherein:
the routing list is identified by an email address; and
the step of receiving an indication that a sender desires to deliver a document to a next stage on the routing list includes receiving the email address.
32. The computer program product of claim 29 wherein:
the routing list is identified by an address at a domain name for routing lists; and
the step of receiving an indication that a sender desires to deliver a document to a next stage on the routing list includes receiving the address.
33. The computer program product of claim 29 wherein the step of receiving an indication that a sender desires to deliver a document to a next stage on the routing list comprises:
receiving a query from the sender for an identity of a recipient from the next stage of the routing list.
34. The computer program product of claim 29 wherein the program code is further adapted to perform the step of:
tracking a current recipient of the document from the routing list.
35. The computer program product of claim 29 wherein the routing list includes rules.
36. The computer program product of claim 35 wherein the rules are encapsulated in forms.
37. The computer program product of claim 35 wherein the rules embody a business process.
38. The computer program product of claim 29 wherein the routing list includes conditional recipients.

39. The computer program product of claim 38 wherein the step of receiving an indication that a sender desires to deliver a document to a next stage on a routing list for the document comprises:

receiving a parameter from the sender, wherein the recipient depends on the parameter received.

40. The computer program product of claim 29 wherein the step of receiving an indication that a sender desires to deliver a document to a next stage on a routing list for the document comprises:

receiving the document together with the indication.

41. The computer program product of claim 29 wherein the step of receiving an indication that a sender desires to deliver a document to a next stage on a routing list for the document comprises:

receiving a form containing rules for the routing list.

42. The computer program product of claim 29 wherein the step of receiving an indication that a sender desires to deliver a document to a next stage on a routing list for the document comprises:

receiving a routing parameter for the routing list.

43. The computer program product of claim 29 wherein the program code is further adapted to perform the steps of:

authenticating the sender using the sender's public key;
establishing a first secure connection with the sender; and
receiving the document from the sender via the first secure connection.

44. The computer program product of claim 43 wherein the program code is further adapted to perform the steps of:

- authenticating the recipient using the recipient's public key;
- establishing a second secure connection with the recipient; and
- transmitting the document to the recipient via the second secure connection.

45. An operations center for facilitating a secure delivery of a document from a sender to a next recipient on a routing list, the operations center comprising:

- means for receiving an indication that a sender desires to deliver a document to a next stage on a routing list for the document;
- means for identifying a recipient from the next stage of the routing list; and
- means for providing a key selected from a group consisting of the recipient's public key and an escrow encryption key.

46. The operations center of claim 45 further comprising:

- means for sending the key to the sender.

47. The operations center of claim 45 wherein:

- the routing list is identified by an email address; and
- the means for receiving an indication that a sender desires to deliver a document to a next stage on the routing list includes means for receiving the email address.

48. The operations center of claim 45 wherein:

- the routing list is identified by an address at a domain name for routing lists; and
- the means for receiving an indication that a sender desires to deliver a document to a next stage on the routing list includes means for receiving the address.

49. The operations center of claim 45 wherein the means for receiving an indication that a sender desires to deliver a document to a next stage on the routing list comprises:

means for receiving a query from the sender for an identity of a recipient from the next stage of the routing list.

50. The operations center of claim 45 further comprising:

means for tracking a current recipient of the document from the routing list.

51. The operations center of claim 45 wherein the routing list includes rules.

52. The operations center of claim 45 wherein the routing list includes conditional recipients.

53. The operations center of claim 45 wherein the means for receiving an indication that a sender desires to deliver a document to a next stage on a routing list for the document comprises:

means for receiving the document together with the indication.

54. The operations center of claim 45 wherein the means for receiving an indication that a sender desires to deliver a document to a next stage on a routing list for the document comprises:

means for receiving a form containing rules for the routing list.

55. The operations center of claim 45 wherein the means for receiving an indication that a sender desires to deliver a document to a next stage on a routing list for the document comprises:

means for receiving a routing parameter for the routing list.

56. The operations center of claim 45 further comprising:

means for authenticating the sender using the sender's public key;

means for establishing a first secure connection with the sender; and

means for receiving the document from the sender via the first secure connection.

57. The operations center of claim 56 further comprising:

means for authenticating the recipient using the recipient's public key;

means for establishing a second secure connection with the recipient; and
means for transmitting the document to the recipient via the second secure connection.